

Note from the Commissioner

March 16, 2016

We are making great strides in implementing a coordinated, statewide Quality Improvement System for home-based, center-based, and school-based early care and education programs. The first week of March the Office of Early Childhood signed an agreement with United Way of Connecticut to begin building a unified set of resources and statewide infrastructure.



This Quality Improvement System will allow the Office of Early Childhood to increase the availability of free or low-cost training, coaching, consultation and guidance to early childhood programs across the state. Our Quality Improvement System will offer a critical partnership to programs so that they may embark on a path of continuous quality improvement. By incorporating national best practices, the Quality Improvement System will use dedicated funds to support early care and education providers to foster safe, supportive environments for children and families.

Moving from the current patchwork structure and creating a single system that weaves together existing resources is a complex, long-term process. National experts at the BUILD Initiative, an organization designed to help states develop an early childhood system, advise using Child Care Resource and Referral agencies such as United Way of Connecticut's Child Care 211 as a best practice for building quality improvement systems. [\(Article\)](#) We selected United Way of Connecticut based on its role as Connecticut's Childcare Resource and Referral Agency, its technical infrastructure and existing statewide operations.

We believe that following a this national model for system design will maximize our state's limited quality improvement funding – and that is good for taxpayers especially during the current fiscal climate. States that have not built upon their Child Care Resource and Referral infrastructure have struggled to connect their investments without duplication, waste and confusion for the field.

Expanding Beyond Our Strengths

Connecticut organizations, consultants and providers have a wealth of knowledge on how to help early care and education programs serve families and children better, and the Quality Improvement System will build directly upon these strengths.

For example, Connecticut has been very effective at supporting the highest quality centers. In fact, our state has the highest percentage of programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the country. I want to reassure you that our commitment to supporting

bright stars in our state, such as Accreditation Facilitation Projects, is strong and will remain so going forward. In addition to supporting accreditation, our system must also expand to increase support for programs to offer trauma-informed care, achieve licensing compliance and meet the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) requirements.

Additionally, the Office of Early Childhood is committed to supporting *all* early care and education programs and will extend support to center-based, home-based and school-based providers, both privately funded and publically funded. To do this with limited funds means ensuring that our resources are allocated fairly, wisely and efficiently across many settings.

Building a Unified System

Building a unified Quality Improvement System will help make it possible for more of Connecticut's youngest children to be cared for in high-quality settings that are able to meet their unique needs. In addition, more early care and education providers will have access to free and low-cost trainings, coaches and consultants.

Working with United Way is a critical step that will help us integrate and manage core services with consistency, high quality and accountability.

I look forward to working with you further as we develop and refine Quality Improvement System policies and practices. Together, we can ensure that more families will have peace of mind knowing that their children are cared for by well-trained staff in high-quality settings.

Sincerely,

Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D.
Commissioner
Connecticut Office of Early Childhood